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CITY CLERK
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AGENDA

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MONDAY, September 8, 2008
3:45 P.M.**

- A. Presentation:
Brad Roseberry, GO 21
- B. Presentation:
Neighborhood Center
- C. Review of Agenda





Growth Options for the 21st Century

Growth Options for the 21st Century (Go21) is a national, non-profit, public interest organization dedicated to promoting freight transportation alternatives.

Freight transportation choices have major implications for the economy, highway congestion, fuel use, air pollution and highway safety. Freight volumes are expected to grow approximately 70 percent within the next twenty years and many highways are stretched beyond capacity. The nation faces a complex freight mobility challenge and it is essential that non-highway options are available to keep goods moving.

Freight rail is an excellent alternative. Shipping more freight by rail saves taxpayers money, promotes cleaner air and greater fuel efficiency, improves safety, and lessens worsening highway congestion.

Go21's mission is based principally on recommendations from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, which represents state departments of transportation. AASHTO calls for increased public investment in freight rail infrastructure to help relieve pressure on the nation's roadways. AASHTO found that relatively small investments in new rail capacity would yield tremendous public benefits.

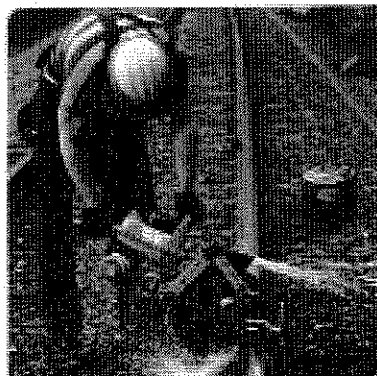
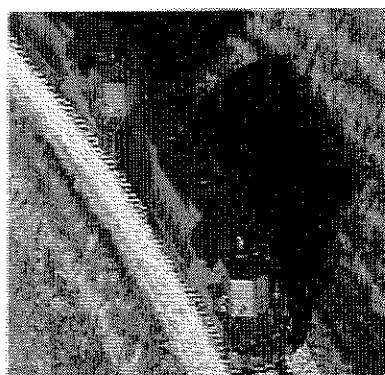
Go21 actively builds public support among influential community and business leaders. Since its inception in 2004, Go21 has assembled over 1,000 political, business, academic, and community leaders in 30 states. These leaders work with Go21 to engage policy makers on opportunities to increase freight rail capacity.

With the expected increase in freight volumes, it is imperative that we pursue transportation options designed to carry these increased quantities of goods as safely and efficiently as possible. America's freight railroads are a clear alternative to continued reliance on an already overcrowded highway system.

A seamless transportation system is crucial for a strong economy and for the US to compete in the global marketplace. Smart transportation policies will improve quality of life for Americans.

Please join with us in promoting policies that improve quality of life!

TRANSPORTATION INVEST IN AMERICA



FREIGHT-RAIL BOTTOM LINE REPORT

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS



FOREWORD

This document presents AASHTO's views concerning the capacity of the nation's freight transportation system, especially the freight-rail system, to keep pace with the expected growth of the economy over the next 20 years. It describes the freight-rail industry, analyzes its benefits to the nation, estimates investment needs and the capacity of the industry to meet these needs, and quantifies the consequences of not investing in freight rail, including the impact on highway congestion and condition.

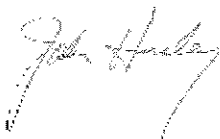
Currently, railroads carry a significant share of the nation's freight and make a substantial contribution to the national economy and to the economies of most states. Given the forecasts of substantial increases in freight over the coming years, it will be a challenge for the freight-rail industry to maintain its share of freight movement, and an even greater challenge to increase it.

The U.S. has benefited from a succession of freight modes of transportation — ports developed in colonial times, inland waterways soon after, railroads in the 19th and early 20th centuries, highways and trucking in the mid and late 20th century. No comparable revolution is on the horizon. Now and into the future, each mode must be modernized and made more efficient, and all modes must be made to work better together, otherwise the nation will pay a high price.

Decisions made by the private sector and by federal, state, and local governments will determine how well the challenge is met. This report can be an important resource for making these decisions. It is one of a "family" of reports on the investment needs of the transportation modes that AASHTO is preparing, including:

- Highway and Transit Bottom Line Report documents investment needs to maintain and improve performance.
- Intercity Passenger Rail Report documents investment needs for existing and planned intercity passenger rail corridors.
- Aviation Bottom Line Report estimates future investment needs to maintain and expand the air transportation system.
- Water Transportation Bottom Line Report documents the investment needs for the nation's ports and waterways.

AASHTO is pleased to offer these reports for the use of those who are committed to making sure that the United States continues to have the best transportation system in the world.



John Horsley
Executive Director

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report describes the nation's freight-rail system, its issues, and its needs. It is one of a "family" of AASHTO Bottom Line reports that deal with all of the major modes of freight and passenger transportation. The report addresses concerns about the capacity of the nation's freight transportation system, especially the freight-rail system, to keep pace with the expected growth of the economy over the next 20 years. The report finds that relatively small public investments in the nation's freight railroads can be leveraged into relatively large public benefits for the nation's highway infrastructure, highway users, and freight shippers.

As part of its family of Bottom Line Reports, AASHTO has published an investment needs report for highways and transit and a report on intercity passenger-rail benefits and investment needs. The cost estimates for freight-rail investment presented in this report were developed independently of those presented in the passenger-rail report. Taken together, these reports provide a comprehensive picture of the benefits of surface transportation to the nation and the value of strategic transportation investments to facilitate freight and passenger movement.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Trucks move most of the nation's freight and will continue to do so, but freight rail is critical to the freight transportation system, the competitiveness of many industries, and the economies of most states. The following are public benefits of the freight-rail system.

■ Transportation System Capacity and Highway Cost Savings

The freight-rail system carries 16 percent of the nation's freight by tonnage, accounting for 28 percent of total ton-miles, 40 percent of intercity ton-miles, and six percent of freight value. If all freight-rail were shifted to trucks tomorrow, it would add 92 billion truck vehicle-miles-of-travel (VMT) to the highway system and cost federal, state, and local transportation agencies an additional \$64 billion for highway improvements over the next 20 years. This \$64 billion is a conservative figure that does not include the costs of improvements to bridges, interchanges, local roads, new roads or system enhancements. If these were included, the estimate could double.

■ Economic Development and Productivity

Freight rail provides shippers with cost-effective transportation, especially for heavy and bulky commodities, and can be a critical factor in retaining and attracting industries that are central to state and regional economies. If all freight-rail were shifted to trucks tomorrow, it would cost current rail shippers an additional \$69 billion this year alone — or \$1.4 trillion over the next 20 years — causing significant changes in business and consumer costs.

■ International Trade Competitiveness

Freight rail, in partnership with the trucking industry, provides intermodal transportation connecting U.S. seaports with inland producers and consumers. Freight rail also carries 16 percent of the nation's cross-border NAFTA trade. Intermodal freight-rail service is crucial to the global competitiveness of U.S. industries.

■ Environmental Health and Safety

Freight rail is fuel-efficient and generates less air pollution per ton-mile than trucking. Rail also is a preferred mode for hazardous materials shipments because of its positive safety record.

■ Emergency Response

Freight rail is vital to military mobilization and provides critically needed transportation system redundancy in national emergencies.

At issue is the capacity of the freight-rail system to grow with the economy and continue to provide these public benefits.

The U.S. economy is growing, and with it the demand for freight transportation services. With moderate growth in the economy — about three percent per year — domestic freight tonnage will increase by 57 percent by 2020 and import-export tonnage will increase by nearly 100 percent.

Today trucks and the highway system carry 78 percent of domestic tonnage, the freight-rail system carries 16 percent, and barges and coastal shipping carry six percent. By 2020, the highway system must carry an additional 6,600 million tons of freight (an increase of 62 percent), and the freight rail system must carry an additional 888 million tons (an increase of 44 percent). However, the highway system is increasingly congested, and the social, economic, and environmental costs of adding new highway capacity are prohibitively high in many areas. State departments of transportation are asking if expanding the capacity of the freight-rail system in some cases might be a cost-effective way of increasing the capacity of the total transportation system.

The freight-rail system was a triumph of 19th century America. It freed business and industry from the need to locate near sea, river, and canal ports. It opened up domestic east-west trade corridors and underpinned the development of the United States as an industrial power. But the freight-rail system was eclipsed in the 20th century by trucking and highways, which freed business and industry again, this time from the need to locate near rail lines and terminals. Long-haul trucking, which provided reliable, door-to-door service, captured a large share of east-west freight traffic from the railroads and much of the north-south freight traffic from coastal steamers and river barges. Much of the railroad industry slid into bankruptcy in the mid-1900s.

The government deregulated the railroad industry in 1980. The mergers and reorganization that followed restructured the industry. System mileage was cut in half, from 380,000 miles of track at its peak in 1920 to 172,000 miles today. Ownership was consolidated into seven Class I railroads that today originate 84 percent of the traffic and generate 91 percent of railroad revenue, and 551 regional and short-line railroads that operate 30,000 miles of track, originate 16 percent of traffic, and generate nine percent of railroad revenue. Freight-rail productivity was increased; ton-miles handled per railroad employee have nearly quadrupled since 1980. Rates were dropped, service was improved, and market share was stabilized at 28 percent of total domestic ton-miles and about 40 percent of intercity ton-miles.

However, the productivity gains and competitive rates have not been sufficient to rebuild market share and increase revenue. Railroad revenues have continued to drop. The industry's return on investment has improved from about four percent in 1980 to about eight percent in 2000; however, it is still below the cost of capital at 10 percent. Most of the benefits of railroad reorganization and productivity improvements have accrued to shippers and the economy in the form of rate cuts, rather than to the railroads and their investors.

This is a major problem for the railroad industry because it is extraordinarily capital-intensive. Railroads spend about five times more to maintain rail lines and equipment than the average U.S. manufacturing industry spends on plant and equipment. Wary of the gap between the

railroads' capital needs and their income, investors have backed away from railroad stocks. This has reduced the amount of money available to railroads to invest in the freight-rail system, forcing the railroads either to borrow money to maintain and expand infrastructure or defer maintenance and improvements.

The rail industry today is stable, productive, and competitive, with enough business and profit to operate but not to replenish its infrastructure quickly or grow rapidly. Market forces will continue to pressure the rail industry to streamline and downsize, to maximize revenues, and to minimize capital costs. The freight-rail system's possible futures are as follows:

■ No Growth

With minimal Class I investments accomplished by the railroads from revenue alone and from investments in short-line improvements and safety enhancements, the freight-rail system could carry the same volume of freight in 2020 as it carries today, but little more. Freight that could not be handled by the railroads, much of it heavy commodities, would move to trucks and the highway system. This would shift almost 900 million tons of freight and 31 billion truck VMT to the highways, costing shippers \$326 billion, costing highway users \$492 billion (in travel time, operating, and accident costs), and adding \$21 billion to highway costs over the 20-year period. This \$21 billion is a conservative figure that does not include the costs of improvements to bridges, interchanges, local roads, new roads, or system enhancements. If these were included, the estimate could double. This scenario illustrates how insufficient investment in our nation's freight-rail system could negatively impact highways and the overall transportation system.

■ Constrained Investment

With additional investment — approximately what the Class I railroads can afford today from their revenue plus borrowing — the freight-rail system could handle additional traffic, but could not keep pace with growing demands for freight movement. It could handle around half of its "fair share" of forecast growth in freight-rail tonnage. The balance would likely shift to trucks and the highway system. This would transfer almost 450 million tons of freight and 15 billion truck VMT to the highways, costing shippers \$162 billion, costing highway users \$238 billion (in travel time, operating, and accident costs), and adding \$10 billion to highway costs over the 20-year period. Inclusion of costs for bridges, interchanges, etc., could double this estimate.

■ Base Case

With a higher level of investment, the freight rail system could maintain its current share of commodity-lane traffic, and accommodate its "fair share" of forecast growth in freight-rail tonnage. Funding would come from a combination of railroad investments (above and beyond what currently can be funded from revenues and borrowing) and public-sector participation. In this scenario, the highway system would still shoulder the full forecast growth in truck-freight tonnage and truck VMT.

■ Aggressive Investment

With a still-higher level of investment, the freight rail system could increase its share of freight traffic, capturing more than its base case share of forecast growth, and relieving some of the anticipated truck and congestion pressure on the nation's highway system. Funding needs would be met by greater railroad investments and increased public-sector participation. This would allow freight rail to carry a larger percentage of freight tonnage in 2020 than it carries today (17 percent in 2020 compared to 16 percent today). It would shift 600 million tons of freight and 25 billion truck VMT off the highway system, save shippers \$239 billion, save highway users \$397 billion, and reduce highway costs by \$17 billion. Inclusion of costs for bridges, interchanges, etc., could double this estimate.

To simply keep up with freight rail's share of the forecast demand — the base case scenario — the freight-rail system needs substantial capital investment. The precise amount has not been determined, but can be generally estimated from a variety of sources.¹

■ **Rail Safety Needs — \$13.8 billion**

The Institute for Transportation Research and Education at North Carolina State University surveyed state rail-safety needs, focusing on highway-rail at-grade crossings. This estimate includes costs for additional warning systems, grade separations, grade-crossing eliminations, and track relocations for both freight and passenger systems. These needs have usually been addressed by a combination of private and public investment.

■ **Short-Line Improvements — \$11.8 billion**

The tracks and bridges of much of the nation's short-line system are inadequate to handle the newer 286,000-pound and 315,000-pound railcars coming into service. A study commissioned by the American Short-Line Rail Road Association estimated the cost of upgrading the nation's short-line system to handle 286,000-pound railcars at \$6.9 billion. This estimate is consistent with the findings of the Railroad Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (White Paper III, April 2000), which was based on a 1999 survey by AASHTO. The council found a total capital need of \$11.8 billion, of which \$9.5 billion was unfunded. The council's estimate included deferred maintenance, safety and speed improvements, and weight improvements. In recent years, these needs have been largely addressed by public investment.

■ **Class I Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance — \$4 to \$5 billion annually, or \$80 to \$100 billion over 20 years**

■ **Class I Infrastructure Improvements, above and beyond Repair and Maintenance — \$3.5 billion annually, or \$70 billion over 20 years**

The Class I railroads currently are investing around \$2 billion annually for improvements above and beyond repair and maintenance. This is not sufficient to meet the needs of the base case scenario, and is more consistent with the constrained investment scenario. Should this continue, it means that freight rail will lose market share, thereby increasing transportation and highway system costs over the next 20 years. Higher levels of investment will be needed to achieve either the base case scenario or aggressive investment scenario.

The total cost to achieve the base case scenario is estimated at \$175 to \$195 billion over 20 years. Railroads should be able to provide the majority of the funding needed (up to \$142 billion dollars) from revenue and borrowing, but the remainder (up to \$53 billion, or \$2.65 billion annually) would have to come from other sources — including but not limited to loans, tax credits, sale of assets, and other forms of public-sector participation. Compared to the constrained investment scenario, the base case scenario removes 450 million tons of freight and 15 billion truck VMT from the highways, saves shippers \$162 billion, saves highway users \$238 billion, and saves \$10 billion in highway costs over the 20-year period. Inclusion of costs for bridges, interchanges, etc., could double this estimate.

The total cost to achieve the aggressive investment scenario is estimated at \$205 to \$225 billion over 20 years. Up to \$83 billion, or \$4.15 billion annually, would have to come from sources other than railroad revenue and borrowing. Compared to the constrained investment scenario, the aggressive investment scenario removes 1,035 million tons of freight and 40 billion truck VMT from the highways, saves shippers \$401 billion, saves highway users \$635 billion, and saves \$27 billion in highway costs over the 20-year period. Inclusion of costs for bridges, interchanges, etc., could double this estimate.

While these are preliminary estimates that should be confirmed by detailed benefit/cost studies, the conclusion is that relatively small additional investments in the nation's freight rail system can be leveraged to provide relatively large public benefits.

These investments must be made at the network level. Public participation in rail system investments has historically addressed the bottom of the system: grade crossings, branch lines, and commuter rail services. The present need is to treat the key elements at the top of the system: nationally significant corridor choke points, intermodal terminals and connectors, and urban rail interchanges. Investments at this level hold the most promise of attracting and retaining freight-rail traffic through improvements in service performance.

Broadly speaking, the choice for the nation's freight-rail system is between "market-driven evolution" of the freight-rail system and "public-policy-driven expansion" of the system. Market-driven evolution will accommodate some of the forecast freight growth, but relieve little of the forecast congestion on the highway system. A public-policy-driven expansion could produce a rail industry that provides the cost-effective transport needed to serve national and global markets, relieve pressure on overburdened highways, and support local social, economic, and environmental goals.

Many states have already taken steps consistent with a public policy-driven approach, by investing directly in their rail systems, and by forming public-private partnerships to implement specific projects. But making increased levels of investment and realizing the public benefits of a strong freight-rail system at a national level will require a new partnership among the railroads, the states, and the federal government.

This partnership must enunciate a clear national policy of improving freight system productivity; expanding state eligibility and flexibility to invest where freight-rail improvements have significant highway and public benefits; increasing loan and credit enhancement programs; and initiating innovative tax-expenditure financing programs, including accelerated depreciation, tax-exempt bond financing, and tax-credit bond financing. The partnership must extend beyond state boundaries to match the scale of the policy and investment decisions to the scale of today's freight-rail system.

The problems of the freight transportation sector, especially the challenges facing the freight-rail industry, and the consequences of not addressing them are clearer today than when ISTEA and TEA-21 were enacted, and they will sharpen in the coming years. The public sector and the private freight transportation community must advance public policy options that improve the capacity, productivity, and security of the freight-rail system as an integral part of the national freight transportation system.



Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (S. 1125 / H.R. 2116)

The nation is facing a freight mobility crisis. The economy continues to expand, imports are skyrocketing, and businesses are increasingly relying on just-in-time delivery of goods. Taken together, these factors result in transportation demand surpassing the capacity of the U.S. freight system.

The U.S. Department of Transportation, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and others are predicting a nearly 70 percent increase in the amount of freight traffic. State transportation officials report that the costs of adding enough highway capacity to meet this demand are prohibitively high. To help solve this problem, railroads should assume a greater share of the freight transportation responsibility.

Railroads are investing record amounts in their networks, but that will not be enough to take advantage of railroads' potential to meet our freight transportation needs. Tax incentives for rail capacity enhancements would help bridge the funding gap and produce public benefits that would far exceed the cost of the incentives.

Without incentives, many rail projects that would otherwise improve the ability of our nation's farms and businesses will be delayed or not completed at all.

Further, as AASHTO pointed out in its *Freight Rail Bottom Line Report*, increased use of freight rail will benefit the public:

- One intermodal train can carry as many as 280 truck trailers and trains hauling other types of freight can carry the loads of 500 trucks. Moving more freight by rail means less congested highways.
- Moving more freight by rail means less spending by taxpayers on highway maintenance and construction.
- Locomotives are three or more times more fuel efficient than trucks. One locomotive can move one ton of freight over 420 miles on a single gallon of diesel. Also, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that for every ton-mile, a locomotive emits roughly three times less NO_x and particulates than a truck. Moving more freight by rail means less fuel consumption and better air quality.

The Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (FRICEA, S. 1125 / H.R. 2116) would substantially boost investment in new rail capacity by giving a 25 percent tax credit for investments in new freight rail infrastructure that expands rail capacity. This would give railroads, shippers, and others incentives to lay "track where no track has gone before." The bill would also put railroads on equal footing with trucking companies and barges by allowing railroads to "expense" their infrastructure spending.

How FRICEA Works

1. Tax Credit for New Infrastructure Investment

The proposal would provide a 25 percent tax credit for capital expenditures to: (i) new qualifying freight rail infrastructure property where such property does not currently exist; and (ii) new qualified locomotive property that increases the horsepower capacity of a railroad's fleet.

Examples of new qualifying infrastructure property:

- Adding new track to existing right-of-way, such as a second main line;
- Adding or extending new sidings on existing right-of-way;
- Constructing new intermodal or new transload facilities; or
- New technology-based expansion, like adding new high-tech signals.

2. Expensing of Capital Expenditures for Freight Rail Infrastructure Property

To place capital cost recovery of railroad infrastructure on the same basis as other competing freight transportation modes, all freight rail infrastructure capital expenditures would be eligible for expensing treatment. Expenditures that also qualify for the infrastructure tax credit would be subject to a 100 percent basis reduction for credit amounts earned with respect to such property. Expenditures for locomotives, land acquisition, or railroad rolling stock do not qualify for expensing treatment.

Qualifying freight rail infrastructure property would include:

- Railroad grading or tunnel bore; tunnels and subways; track, including ties, rails, ballast and other track material; bridges, trestles, culverts, and other elevated and submerged structures;
- Terminals, yards, roadway buildings, fuel stations, and railroad wharves and docks, including fixtures, and equipment used exclusively therein;
- Railroad signal, communication or other operating systems, including components of such systems that must be installed on locomotives or other rolling stock; or
- Intermodal transfer or transload facilities or terminals, including fixtures and equipment used exclusively therein.

3. Who Qualifies?

Any person (railroad, rail customer, trucking company investing in intermodal, port investing in connecting infrastructure, etc.) making expenditures for eligible property would qualify for the credit and expensing treatment.

4. Effective Dates

The proposal provisions would be effective for property placed in service after December 31, 2007, and would sunset after December 31, 2012.

September 8, 2008

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

The City of Council Bluffs is very interested in a strong and healthy rail system. Railroads have played a major role in our past and are critical to our future. With this in mind, we encourage you to support the need to expand the use of railroads to move freight not only in Iowa, but throughout the country.

According to the Freight Rail Bottom Line Report published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), there will be at least a 67% increase in the amount of freight that will need to be moved by the year 2020. If alternatives are not found, all that freight will be shipped on our roads.

According to AASHTO, if rail captures just one percent more of what it currently move in freight, this country will see a nationwide savings of over \$1 trillion dollars over a 20 year period. If nothing is done, moving all this additional freight by truck will cost the economy of this country almost \$840 billion.

At a time when governments at all levels are dealing with financial hardships, we should be looking for long-term solutions to save taxpayers money.

We believe a positive first step is to encourage the growth and investment in rail. The Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act (FRICEA: H.R. 2116, S.1125) will help build new infrastructure to capture this expected increase in freight. Please support, and co-sponsor, this important piece of legislation.

Please join the City of Council Bluffs in our efforts to keep a strong and growing railroad system.

Sincerely,

Tom Hanafan
Mayor

Darren Bates
Council Member

Scott Belt
Mayor Pro-Tem

Lynne Branigan
Council Member

Matt Schultz
Council Member

Matt Walsh
Council Member

September 8, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

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Matt Schultz
Council Member

Matt Walsh
Council Member

September 8, 2008

The Honorable Steve King
Member of Congress
1609 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman King:

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